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UNCLAS SANAA 000853

SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TO MCC FOR A. BAYLOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MINISTER SOFAN ON MCC THRESHOLD: WE'LL DO IT OURSELVES

REF: SANAA 265

1. USAID Director and Pol/Econoff met March 28 with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Ahmad Sofan. USAID Director conveyed that Yemen's MCC Threshold paper was very strong (reftel), and urged the ROYG to focus on specific reforms within the MCC categories rule of law and corruption. Sofan agreed that such a focus is the goal of his ministry as it works to coordinate government departments and develop an implementation plan. USAID Director offered to bring in experts to assist the ROYG identify priorities and develop program activities. Sofan emphasized that MOPIC does not want to use outsiders as part of this process, and instead wants the change to "come from inside".

2. Comment. Post supports MOPIC's autonomous approach, which is compatible with MCC objectives. Real progress on critical issues of corruption and rule of law will likely not occur if perceived to be imposed from the outside. There is some risk that MOPIC is using this tactic to avoid undertaking difficult reforms. Despite Sofan's official position, MOPIC officials and USAID agreed in unofficial discussions that USAID expertise will be available to ROYG committees as they work on details of the Threshold implementation plan. End Comment.
Krajeski